

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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R 211729Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6667
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DEPT FOR ARA/PAF AND PAN

USCINCSO FOR J-2 AND PAO

PANCANAL FOR IO

E.O. 11652: N/A
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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTIONS

FOLLOWING FROM ICA/PANAMA P R 211728Z APR 78 SENT ACTION USINFO
WASHDC INFO SECSTATE WASHDC REPEATED TO YOU:

QUOTE UNCLAS

MEDIA REACTION

E.O. 11652: N/A

1-PANAMA CITY.--TREATY NEWS NO LONGER NUMBER ONE TOPIC OF
PANAMANIAN MEDIA APRIL 21 WITH OTHER LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL NEWS
STORIES TAKING CONSIDERABLE FRONT PAGE SPACE.

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2-PRO-GOP CRITICA CARRIES LOCAL ORIGIN FRONT PAGE ITEM SAYING
VISIT BY PRES. CARTER IS EXPECTED IN SECOND HALF OF MAY. STORY
QUOTES PANAMANIAN AMB. TO U.S. LEWIS AS "CONFIRMING THE
POSSIBILITY THAT THE U.S. PRESIDENT MIGHT ARRIVE AT THAT TIME."

3-MATUTINO AND ESTRELLA FRONT PAGE COMMUNIQUE FROM FONMIN WITH
SPANISH TRANSLATION OF SENATE'S RESOLUTION TO PRES. CARTER

OFFICIALLY CONSENTING TO CANAL TREATIES, AND INCLUDING TEXT OF ALL AMENDMENTS, RESERVATIONS, ETC. ONLY OTHER FRONT PAGE STORIES ARE WIRE SERVICE ITEMS NOTING CONGRATULATIONS FROM LEADERS IN COSTA RICA, VENEZUELA AND SPAIN. ENGLISH LANGUAGE STAR AND HERLAD FRONT PAGES AP NEW YORK SANTIAGO FERRARI UNLABELED COMMENTARY ON TREATIES, AND AP CORPUS CHRISTI ITEM QUOTING EX-HEAD OF PANCANAL PILOTS AS SAYING TREATIES ARE "IDEA WHOSE TIME HAD COME."

4-MATUTINO EDIT ANALYZES PANAMANIAN REACTION TO TREATIES: "IN GENERAL...THE REACTION...TO THE NEW TREATIES IS CERTAINLY WHAT COULD BE EXPECTED: A MINORITY WHICH JUDGES INSUFFICIENT THE GAINS WHICH THESE TREATIES GIVE PANAMA, AND A LARGE MAJORITY WHICH RISING ABOVE ANY EGOTISTICAL THOUGHTS OR SECTARIAN PLANS, UNDERSTANDS IN ALL ITS MAGNITUDE THE FACT THAT WE HAVE ACHIEVED THE RESCUE OF OUR TOTAL SOVEREIGNTY, AS WELL AS THE MATERIAL ADVANTAGES WHICH THESE TREATIES GIVE US."

5-MATUTINO BELIEVES THAT TREATIES, WHILE NOT PERFECT, ARE SIGNIFICANT ADVANCE, ESPECIALLY SINCE "THE DANGEROUS CONTENT OF A RESERVATION IN THE NEUTRALITY TREATY" WAS WARDED OFF, "LEAVING IT VERY CLEAR THAT NEITHER OF THE TWO TREATIES GIVES THE RIGHT OF INTERVENTION IN PANAMANIAN TERRITORY."

6-DESPITE THIS, MATUTINO CONTINUES, SOME GROUPS "USING THEIR CIVIC RIGHTS" ARE INSISTING ON NEW PLEBISCITE. THE GOVERNMENT UNCLASSIFIED

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MUST MAKE SUCH A DECISION, SAYS MATUTINO, BUT "IT CANNOT BE AT THE WISH OF A MINORITY...WITH SUBJECTIVE CRITERIA, WHICH WOULD IMPOSE ITS CRITERIA ON THE ENTIRE NATION...AFTER A LONG STRUGGLE...IN WHICH WERE ABSENT MANY OF THOSE WHO TODAY CLAMOR FOR FULL GUARANTEES AND POSSIBLE REPRESENTATION IN A HYPOTHETICAL CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY."

7-PISANDO CALLOS COLUMN BY CARLOS J. NUNEZ IN CRITICA IS EVEN MORE HARSH WITH CRITICS OF NEW TREATY: "IN THE MIDDLE OF THE FIESTA WITH WHICH THE PANAMANIAN PEOPLE CELEBRATE THE RATIFICATION OF THE TORRIJOS-CARTER TREATY, SUDDENLY THERE HAS APPEARED THE GHOST OF THE SO-CALLED POLITICAL PARTIES, WHO WITH THE GALL AND CYNICISM OF THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN INFALLIBLE IN THEIR MISTAKES, JOIN IN A SUSPICIOUS MARRIAGE TO TRY TO DAMAGE THE TRIUMPH OF A PEOPLE WHO ARE TIRED OF SO MANY VEXATIONS." NUNEZ CONCLUDES, "WE HAVE DEFEATED THE NORTH AMERICAN ULTRA-RIGHT, BUT WE HAVE YET TO DEFEAT ONCE AND FOR ALL THE LOCAL ULTRA-RIGHT."

8-CRITICISM OF TREATIES STILL APPEARS, IN MILD FORM IN LUIS RESTREPO MATUTINO COLUMN, IN WHICH HE HAILS TREATIES, BUT NOTES THAT UP UNTIL LAST MINUTE VOTE WAS IN DOUBT. "THE PANAMANIAN OF TOMORROW WHO WILL WRITE THE LAST CHAPTERS...OF THE PANAMANIAN

DRAMA, WILL FIND IN THIS DOCUMENT SOMETHING TO DENOUNCE IN THE HUMILIATING IMPOSITIONS OF THE LAST MINUTE, IMPOSITIONS WHICH IN TRUTH, DESPITE EVERYTHING ONE HEARS, DO NOT PLEASE THE PANAMANIAN PEOPLE...DO NOT PLEASE THEM AND WERE NOT NECESSARY...UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE...THE INTENTION TO HUMILIATE THE PANAMANIAN NATION, THE IDEA OF MAKING THE IMPERIALIST AND COLONIALIST CLUTCH PREVAIL WAS VISIBLE...DESPITE THIS...THE PANAMANIAN PEOPLE HAVE ACHIEVED A SUBSTANTIAL ADVANCE IN THE UNEQUAL FIGHT..." RESTREPO HAS BEEN ONE OF MOST VOCAL CRITICS OF TREATIES, ESPECIALLY AS MODIFIED BY DECONCINI AND OTHER RESERVATIONS, BUT HAS NOW JOINED OTHER SUPPORTERS.

9-LAWYER AND MAUTINO COLUMNIST MIGUEL MORENO CONTINUES HIS BITTER DENUNCIATION OF TREATIES, HOWEVER, AND SHARPLY CRITICIZES TORRIJOS
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FOR ACCEPTING PACTS IN NAME OF PANAMANIAN PEOPLE. ACCORDING TO MORENO, "THE LEADERSHIP RESOLUTION MENTIONS ONLY NON-INTERVENTION BY THE U.S. IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF PANAMA, BUT DELIBERATELY EXCLUDES NON-INTERVENTION IN EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, WHICH IN TERMS OF THE TREATIES IS THE MOST INTERESTING AND CAN AFFECT THE NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY...THIS EVIL EDITING SHOULD HAVE BEEN REJECTED BY THE GOVERNMENT AND NOT ACCEPTED AS IT WAS...(SINCE) IT IS A QUESTION OF THE INTERPRETATION THAT WE PANAMANIAN SHOULD GIVE TO THE USE OF U.S. ARMED FORCE AND NOT OF AN EXPRESS AND CATEGORIC PROHIBITION OF INTERVENTION."

10-TORRIJOS, CONTINUES MORENO, "IS NOT THE LAW, IS NOT THE SOVEREIGN WILL" OF THE NATION. "IT IS INEXPLICABLE THAT THE CHIEF OF GOVERNMENT HIMSELF, BY HIMSELF, WITH NO PREVIOUS NATIONAL CONSULTATION, HAS SAID IN THE NAME OF THE COUNTRY THAT HE ACCEPTS THE LEADERSHIP AMENDMENT AND THEREFORE APPROVES THE TREATIES, ASSUMING HE REPRESENTS THE WILL OF A MILLION SIX HUNDRED THOUSAND PANAMANIAN WHO HAVE NOT YET EXPRESSED THEMSELVES... THE ONLY WAY TO ESTABLISH THE NATIONAL WILL...IS THROUGH A NATIONAL PLEBISCITE." ITEM UNQUOTE
JORDEN

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